CRIME AND TOURISM IN SOUTH-AFRICA: INTERNATIONAL TOURISTS' PERCEPTION AND RISK

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ABSTRACT

Tourism can be a key factor in overcoming the many socio-economic challenges facing South Africa if the reality and perception of tourist safely is addressed urgently and adequately. The research for this paper focuses on tourism in South Africa and analyses the poor perception of personal safety of international tourists (1997-1998), the important role that tourism play in the economy and development, the influence of crime on the tourist destination image and the tourist flows as well as the general crime pattern for 1997 as perceived risk indicator for tourists visiting South Africa.

Introduction

On the 6th of September 1997 Cape Town learnt that it had lost the bid to host the 2004 Olympic Games in favour of Athens. Politicians, development scientists, economists and sports enthusiasts in South Africa and the local authorities of the Western Cape had view the Olympic games as a development opportunity of a lifetime. Unfortunately the crime situation in South Africa, and in particularly in the Cape Peninsula, played a role in the International Olympic Committee's (ICO) decision not to give the 2004 Olympic Games to Cape Town (The Citizen, 1997: 25). The trigger for the restructuring and modernisation of the Western Cape region on a scale never envisaged was lost.

In 1997 tourism was the fourth-highest foreign exchange earner (after mining, gold and manufacturing) in South Africa. The South African tourism industry accounted for 8,2 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 1998. Tourism created 187 000 new jobs over the past three years (1996-1998), raising the number of South Africans employed in this sector to 737 600. This number is expected to rise to 860 000 by the year 2000 (Sithole, 1999: 6). The government expects the tourism industry to grow to 10% of GDP by the year 2005, earning the country R40-billion in foreign exchange and creating about a million jobs if factors inhibiting the industry can be overcome (Schimke and Brown, 1996: 3). South Africa, which remains Africa's top destination and attracts one in every four visitors to the continent, experienced its 10th successive year of increased foreign tourism (1988-1997), but the country is seen by foreign tourists as a high-risk destination (Business Day, 1997: 3). Widely publicised crimes committed against foreign tourists have an immediate effect in terms of declining foreign visitor numbers and the international image as a tourist destination. Bloom (in Pizam and Mansfeld, 1996: 92), is of the opinion that, in spite of the special tourism product that South Africa has to offer and the increasing interest and enthusiasm in the international market-place, there are critical factors such as political unrest, violence and crime with the resultant risks to personal safety, which could adversely affect the country's tourism potential and thus a major socio-economic lifeline for the years to come. Evidence gathered in many parts of the world demonstrate that safety, tranquillity and peace are necessary for the prosperity of the tourism industry (Pizam and Mansfeld, 1996: 1).

Data

Reliable statistics about crimes against tourists are in short supply. According to Ambinder (1992: 10) tourist crime victimisation data are closely guarded by many tourism-reliant destinations. Prior to November 1995, it was practically impossible to analyse the spatial pattern of crime against international tourists in South Africa, because crime statistics did not have a spatial or locational reference and the police were reluctant to part with crime data. The researcher had to rely on the INCH-system (Institute for Contemporary History - crime cases reported in the press) to determine the locations of serious cases of crime against tourists (Ferreira 1999: 316). The problem with this type of data is that it is incomplete. Normally only the most sensational crimes against tourist are reported in the press.

After a workshop with the major stakeholders in the tourism industry and the South African Police Service (SAPS), in November 1995, the South African Police Research Unit started to record all serious crimes against tourists as part of their priority crime data base. This data recorded "where" the reported crimes occurred as well as the "type" of crime committed. Unfortunately this category of data was terminated in July 1997.

The data used in this analysis were obtained from four different sources. Firstly, all the cases of serious violent crimes against international tourists that were reported in the press from January 1997 to December 1998 were obtained through the Institute for Contemporary History (INCH-system). Data on crimes against tourists were also extracted from the South African Police Priority Crime Database (from January to July 1997). The national crime database for 1997, with 37 priority crime categories (only the "big six": public violence, rape, murder and aggravated assault, burglary, robbery and motor vehicle theft) was used to analyse the general crime pattern, was made available by the HSRC's Geographical Information Systems Unit. The fourth data source was the bi-annual survey (January and August 1998), conducted by the South African Tourism Board (Satour) to determine the travel patterns and perceptions of foreign visitors regarding South Africa's infrastructure, facilities and security within the country.

The Image of South Africa as a Tourist Destination

In a review of tourist attraction research. Lew (1988: 553) noted that "image is the most important aspect of a tourist attraction". The role of destination image in tourism has a greater significance in marketing when viewed through the framework of the traveller's buying behaviour. Creating and managing an appropriate destination image is critical to an effective positioning and marketing strategy (Echtner and Ritchie, 1991: 3). South Africa, which desperately needs tourists to both bring in cash and create jobs, is on a list of the worlds 10 most dangerous holiday destinations (The Star, 1997: 6). In a major French publication *"Figaro"* Tomlinks (Cape Argus, 1997:1) warned that Cape Town's tourist boom is under threat from Muslim extremists who have declared war in the city.

A tourist's decision to stay home or choose "safer " destinations is translated into significant losses for the totirist industry of a country suffering from high crime rates. According to Ryan (1993: 173) crime can impede tourism by wielding a significant blow to the fragile nature of a destination's safe image. The ramifications can be long-term and extremely difficult and expensive to recover from. The situation in Miami, where a foreign tourist was murdered exemplifies the challenges faced by such a destination (Pizam and Mansfeld, 1996: 37). Once a per-ception becomes attached to a city, it is almost impossible to shake it off, as the citizens of "beautiful Beirut" or "intriguing Belfast" can testify (Griffith-Jones, 1984: 138). The power of the media in forming images of an area must never be underestimated (Lewis, 1986: 102). Although many people are killed annually in car accidents in South Africa, news coverage of crime against tourists played a dominant role in forming an unsafe destination image of the country.

The negative perception of personal safety is one of the current threats to the South African tourism industry (Satour, 1997b: 19). Personal experience and word-of-mouth communication are the most important factors influencing a tourist's decision to visit South Africa (Satour, 1995: 3). This is the reason why it is so important that a tourist should not be a victim of any crime while visiting the country. Environmental Affairs and Tourism Minister, Dr Pallo Jordan, said, "the chief impediment to tourism growth is the perception that South Africa is an unsafe place" (Simon, 1997: 5). Foreign perception on crime resulted in the cancellation of a big international vehicle launch in July 1997 (Du Plessis and Blignaut, 1997: 1) and Veesa's (the international estate owners society) conference in 1998 in Cape Town (Die Burger, 1998: 12). These cancellations have dealt the Western Cape tourism's industry another serious blow. High profile incidents like the hijacking of the president of the West Indies Cricket Board on a visit to Soweto, which enjoyed wide overseas publicity, will reinforce the impression that South Africa is a place to be avoided because crime is out of control (Daily News, 1998: 10). South Africa's chances of hosting events such as the Football World Cup or the Commonwealth Games become correspondingly slimmer against this background.
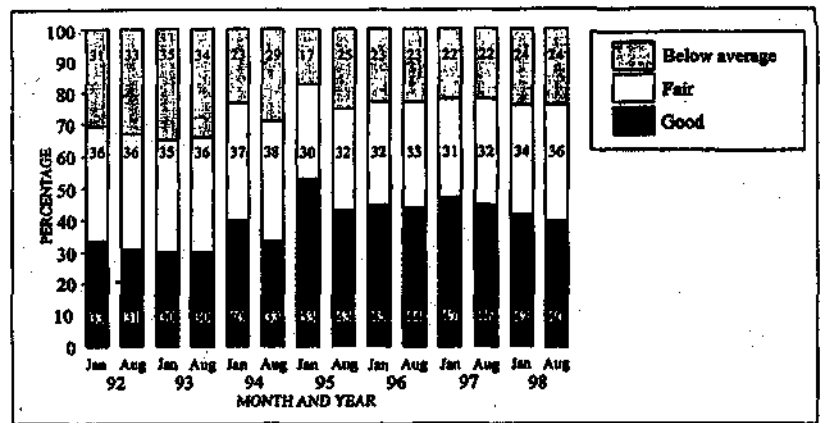

FIGURE 1: Ratings of personal safety by foreign visitors (Satour, 1998 84).
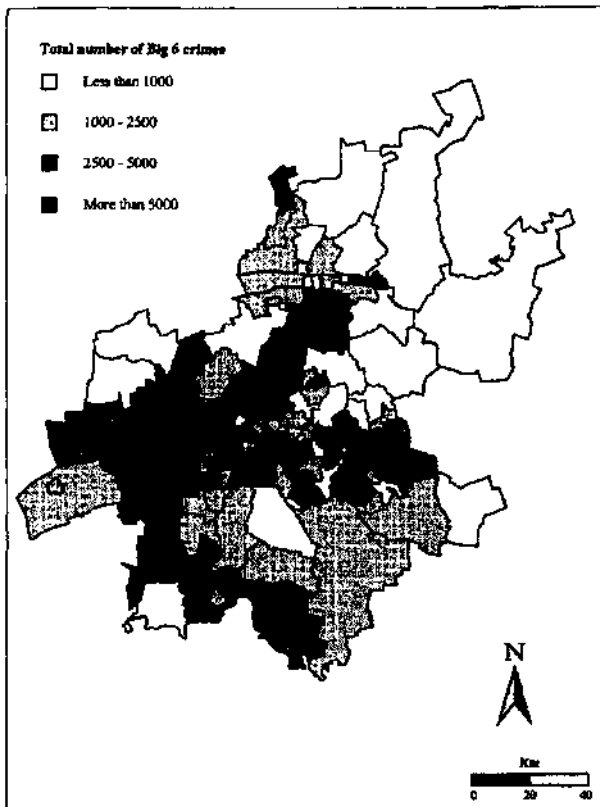
Perceptions on Personal Safety

According to Satour's bi-annual survey of the Foreign Visitor Market in January and August 1998 (Satour, 1998: 85), foreign visitors' perceptions of personal safety in South Africa have deteriorated from a rating of 6,2 in January 1997 to 5,8 in August 1998. Increasing numbers of foreign visitors (60%) fear for their personal safety and they rate personal safety as either "fair" (36%) or "below average" (24%) (see figure 1). On a ten point scale visitors from the Far East/Asia and Africa continue to give personal safety the lowest ratings (3,9 and 4,8 respectively) while visitors from Scandinavia also rated personal safety very low (4,7) (see table 1).

Personal safety in Gauteng is perceived as being very unsatisfactory. In KwaZulu-Natal and the Western Cape perceptions have worsened, after improving somewhat in 1997 (see table 2). Provinces outside the main metropolitan areas, such as Mpumalanga and the Free State, are considered safer than Gauteng and the Western Cape. Fear of crime is still the main disappointment of a trip to South Africa, mentioned spontaneously by 26% of all foreign visitors over the past three years (1996-1998). Crime continues to remain a threat to the development of tourism in South Africa.

The crime situation in South Africa has given the country an undesirable image, which has beginning to impact negatively on its tourism industry. According to Echtner and Ritchie (1991: 3) creating and managing an appropriate destination image is critical to an effective positioning and marketing strategy. Unless corrected, South Africa's image as tourist destination will deteriorate further and many tourists who might have spend vacations in South Africa will choose other safer destinations.
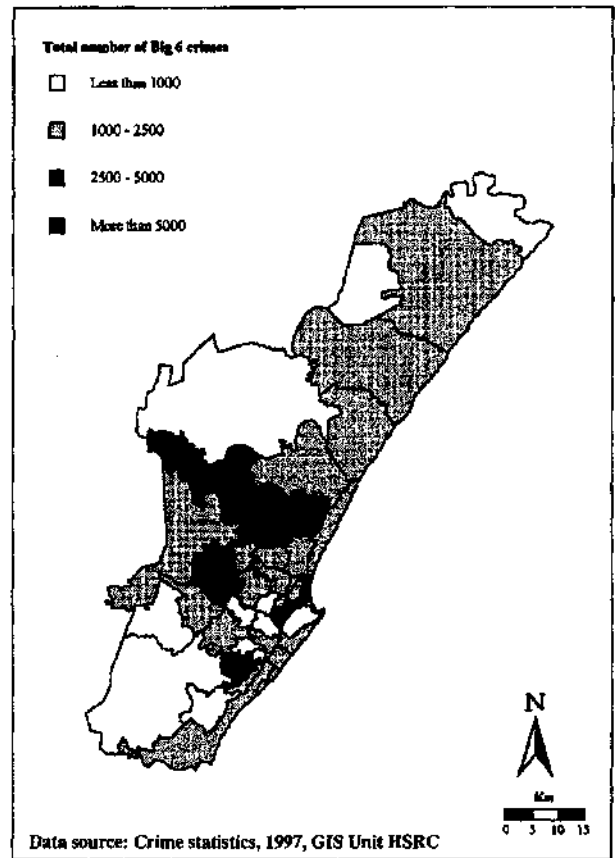
TABEL I: Rating of impressions of safety - by market area (August 1998). (Adapted from Satour, 1999: 93).

COUNTRY	RATING
Africa	4,8
UK	6,1
Germany	6,4
Holland	5,9
France	7,0
Scandinavia	4,7
Other European countries	5,7
North America	6,2
Far East and Asia	3,9
Australasia	5,6
All foreign visitors	5,8

TABLE 2: Rating of personal safety in the main provinces (Adapted from Satour, 1999: 92).

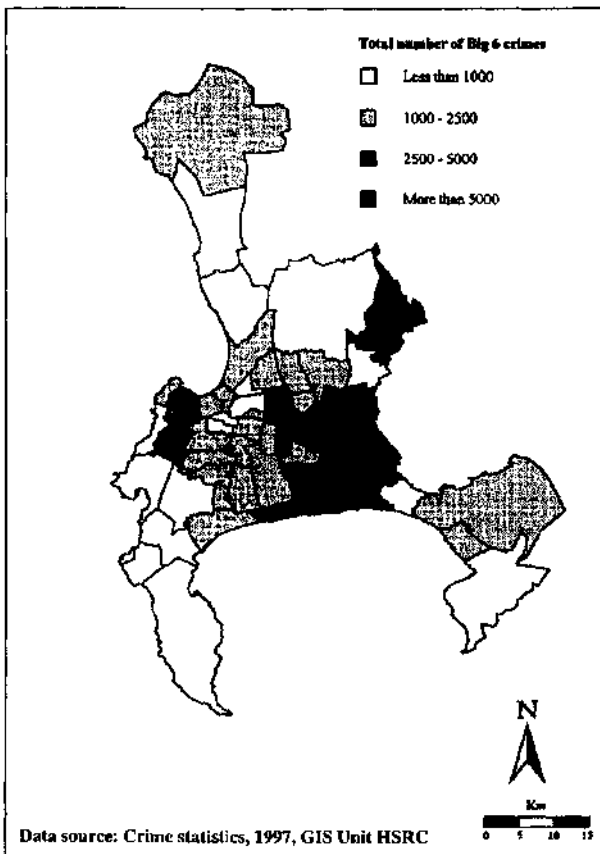| Date	Western Cape	KwaZulu-Natal	Gauteng	Average
January 1995	7,5	6,4	5,5	not available
August 1995	6,8	5,9	3,4	not available
January 1996	7,2	5,5	3,9	6,1
August 1996	6,9	5,8	3,6	6,0
January 1997	7,2	5,9	3,7	6,2
August 1997	7,1	5,9	3,6	6,2
January 1998	6,6	5,4	3,6	5,9
August 1998	6,2	5,7	3,5	5,8

Data source: Crime statistics, 1997, GIS Unit HSRC

FIGURE 2: Total number of "Big 6" crimes per police district in the Gauteng metropolitan area, 1997.
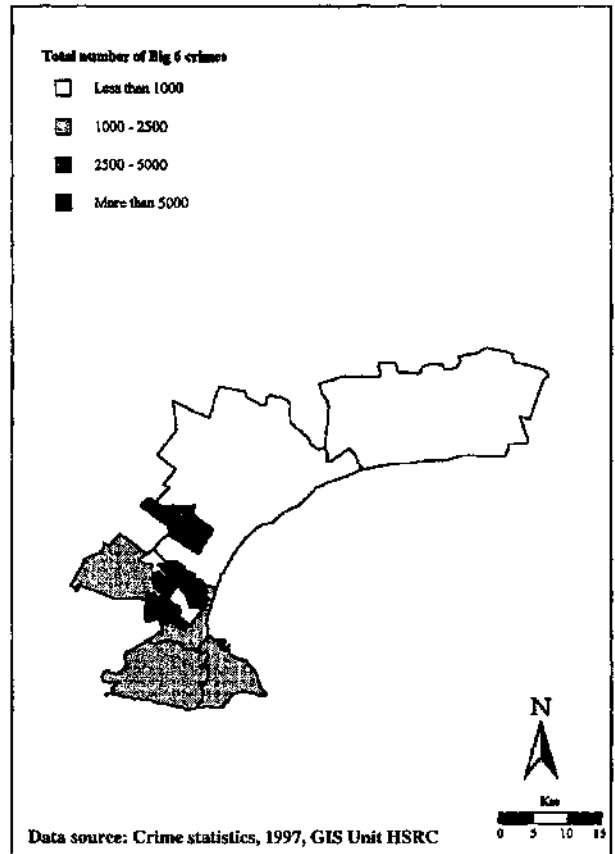

Data source: Crime statistics, 1997, GIS Unit HSRC

FIGURE 3: Total number of "Big 6" crimes per police district in the Durban metropolitan area, 1997.

Data source: Crime statistics, 1997, GIS Unit HSRC

FIGURE 4: Total number of "Big 6" crimes per police district in the Cape Town metropolitan area, 1997.

Data source: Crime statistics, 1997, GIS Unit HSRC

FIGURE 5: Total number of "Big 6" crimes per police district in the Port Elizabeth metropolitan area, 1997.

Spatial Patterns

Method

We obtained the crime statistics for 37 crime categories for 1997 at police station and police area commission level from the GIS Unit of the HSRC in a geographical information system format (ATLAS GIS). The Atlas GIS was used to aggregate and map the crime data obtained from the HSRC. The "big six" crimes was obtained by combining eighteen categories in the crime database (murder, attempted murder, culpable homicide, robbery with fire-arm, robbery without a fire-arm, other robbery, public violence, rape 0-17 years, rape adults, statutory rape, assault, burglary business premises, burglary residential premises, theft of motor vehicles and motorcycles, carjacking, hijacking of trucks, robbery of cash in transit and bank robberies). The total number of incidents for these 18 categories was then mapped per police area commission for each of the four main metropolitan areas of South Africa (Gauteng, Durban and Cape Town) and South Africa as a whole.

The HSRC could not provide us with the population numbers per police area commission for 1997. The only population figures available were on magisterial district level, which does not coincide with the police area commissions. We realise that the data would mean much more if the number of serious crimes could be expressed in relation to the number of people living in each of these spatial units. The high intensity of total crimes in specific spatial units does however have a "red light function effect" as risk indicator for tourists. The total number of crimes in metropolitan areas does, however, serve as a basis for comparison between the different areas, since all these areas have high population densities.

General crime pattern 1997 (the big six)

During the past five years criminality in South Africa has increased to such an extent that the scope of serious crimes (the "big six") in specific areas has become a matter of grave concern. Considered geographically, the largest concentrations of serious crimes in South Africa in 1997, were in the metropolitan areas of Gauteng (Johannesburg and Pretoria), KwaZulu-Natal (Durban) and the Western Cape (Cape Town) (see figure 6). These areas are also important tourism regions (Ferreira, 1999: 317) and hold a risk for tourists visiting these areas. If we analyse the spatial patterns in these main metropolitan areas it is evident that the crime is very high in and around the central business districts and in the low-income residential areas (see figures 2 to 5).

Crime against foreign tourists 1996 -1998

Although the metropolitan areas (figures 2-5) are generally known to have high concentration of crime, an AA Travel Guide survey, conducted nationally among 1 400 tourist accommodation establishments, shows that tourists are also often victims of crime in towns in less urbanised provinces such as the Free State, the Northern Province and the Northern Cape (Business Day, 1997: 3). About two percent of overseas tourists visiting South Africa are affected by the country's escalating crime rate (Satour, 1997a). In actual numbers this amounts to approximately 23 400 tourists, if we take into consideration the statistics of
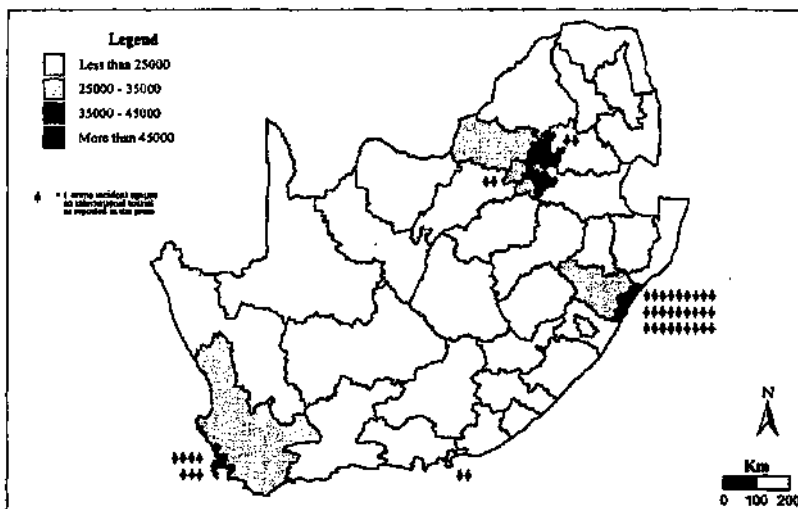

FIGURE 6: "Big 6" crimes per police area commission and crime incidents against international tourist in the four main metropolitan areas of South Africa, 1997.
Symbol in figure represents 1 crime incident against an international tourist as reported in the press.

the South African Tourism Board of 1,17 million tourists in 1997 (Satour, 1997a: 17).

In figure 6 an indication is given of the pattern of crimes against tourists as reported in the press. The general ("big six") crime pattern and the pattern of crimes committed against international tourists is very similar. It seems as if the "hot spots" of general crime should be "no-go" areas for tourists (Ferreira, 1999: 316).

Crime and tourist movements

The latest statistics confirm that Cape Town is still South Africa's leading tourist destination. The Tourism 2000 network revealed that 1,2 million overseas visitors streamed through the Mother City in 1997 compared with 355 000 who visited Durban (Cape Times, 1998: 6). One of the most popular attractions in Cape Town, the Victoria & Alfred Waterfront, with more than 20 million people passing through its entrances in 1997 (though many would have been paying repeat visits), was rocked by two bombings at the end of 1998, sending a very negative message to prospective international visitors.

The central business districts of the metropolitan areas and certain beachfronts was identified as part of the "no-go areas" for tourists in South Africa (Ferreira, 1999: 316). Police initiatives to stop the mugging of tourists and other crime in the Cape Town CBD have forced criminals to prey on visitors staying in areas adjacent to the city centre. Foreign visitors, deterred by crime and high prices in Cape Town's CBD, are spending more time in the Southern Cape, on the West Coast and in the wine lands. Regional tourism bureaus reported a sharp increase in the number of foreign visitors over Christmas 1997. An increase in car rentals by tourists also seems to indicate that tourists are travelling further from Cape Town (Blignaut, 1997b: 1). In the relevant literature this phenomenon is called a spill-over effect (tourism gains in regions adjacent to areas experiencing unsafe conditions) (Sonmez, 1998: 429). According to Mansfeld (1992: 399), a country's visitor numbers correlates with its level of involvement in security situations. Wahab's (1996: 176) statement that "when some chain of events deters tourists from visiting certain destinations, other destinations, whether proximate or faraway, will benefit" (1996: 176) supports Mansfeld's (1992) findings.

In Johannesburg (the economic heartland of South Africa) most foreign visitors stay away from Central Johannesburg, because its crime reputation scares people. Travellers passing through Johannesburg, en route to South Africa's more attractive destinations, tend to stay at hotels in Rosebank, Sandton and Midrand (The Citizen, 1998: 17). The Rosebank/Sandton node is focusing more and more on the business travel market and has to a certain extent replaced the hotels in Central Johannesburg.

Tourist Risk

According to Sonmez (1998: 416) statistics clearly demonstrate that risks alter the demand patterns of tourists. The potential of risk has a significant impact on tourist behaviour. The influence may begin with the decision-making process (Cook 1990; Sonmez and Graefe 1998). Studies show that tourists modify their behaviour - a type of protective measure - during travel. Gu and Martin (1992: 3), who identified destination substitution as a logical solution for international tourists who perceive risk, support this concept.

The potential risk for a tourist in a crowd of 300 000 day visitors to the Golden Mile (Durban) during the Christmas or Easter weekends is very high. It is usually the unwieldy hordes that attract the thieves and murders in the first place and provide them with cover (Meyer, 1998: 3). Visiting places or regions that have previously been identified as dangerous, immediately increases the risk for a tourist. Risk information can play an important role in the reduction of risk (Tsuar, Theng and Wang, 1997: 810). The obligation and responsibility of government is to make accurate tourist information (eg safety tips at airports) available to the public. Tourists can then use the information to take the necessary precautions before entering a high-risk area.

According to Farr (executive head South African Tourism Board in 1998) the murder of one tourist results in 200 potential tourists deciding not to visit South Africa. The financial implications of this is a loss of about R 3,5 million, if we take into account that an average tourist spends about R 17 500 per visit (Van Zyl, 1998: 24).

Recommendations and Conclusions

The most important prerequisite for a successful tourist industry in South Africa is a situation where crime is under control and the safety of tourists can be guaranteed. Although crime is an international problem, violent crime, as is the case in South Africa, is a big deterrent for tourists. According to Dr Chris de Kock, chief director of the Crime Information Management Centre of the SA Police Services, violent crime in South Africa is likely to continue at high levels in the foreseeable future, with increases expected in crimes such as assault and rape (Cape Times, 1997:2).

The image which individuals have of a specific destination plays a crucial role in such a destination's marketing success. This is because the decision-maker acts upon his/her image, beliefs and perceptions of the destination rather than the objective reality of it (Hunt, 1975: 1). There is no point in the Government spending millions marketing South Africa overseas if prospective visitors are confronted on a daily basis by horror reports about crime (Blignaut, 1997a: 3) and crime against tourists in the local and international press. There can be little doubt that an increase in the crime rate means fewer amusements for tourists and thus the loss of tourist dollars/rands

There are no easy solutions to this problem. Policing can, and has to be stepped up still further. Combating crime will boost South Africa's tourism image. Plans need to be devised to prevent the build up of large crowds at a few holiday destinations such as the Golden Mile (Durban) and the Victoria and Alfred Waterfront on specific days. As an alternative, tourists must to be cautioned to avoid such areas on specific days.

The spatial covariance of the pattern of crimes committed against international tourist and the general crime pattern of the "big six " crimes in 1997 confirm that tourists need to avoid certain parts South Africa's main metropolitan areas. Where the general crime rate is high the risk for a tourist to be a victim of a crime situation is directly related to the incidence of "big six" crimes. The general crime pattern (big six) in South Africa can be used as an indicator for the identification of dangerous places/ situations (no-go areas) for international tourists.

Increasing crime rates could reduce the estimated 2,6 million overseas and 5,4 African tourists predicted to visit South Africa by the year 2000 (Futter and Wood, 1997: 54). Viljoen, Executive Director of the Federated hospitality Association of South Africa (Fedhasa), said: "We're no longer the flavour of the month, we now have to compete with over 200 emerging markets including countries like Australia who spend more than $200 million a year on marketing (Connoly, 1996:40).

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